

FOOD DAY

WEDNESDAY

Food & Dining

By Erica Marcus

IT TOOK FIVE YEARS for Stu Feldschu, the owner of Snowflake Ice Cream Shoppe, to figure out how to make a good Italian ice. When Feldschu and his wife, Carolyn, bought the Riverhead store 13 years ago, the ice-cream-making skills, by contrast, came pretty easily. The public library was happy to supply him with dozens of ice-cream production books, and Snowflake's departing owner — as well as the many retired ice-cream makers who gather there — helped the newcomer.

Italian ice, Feldschu discovered, was a different story. Based on the traditional Italian confections sorbetto and granita, Italian ice is popular primarily in the New York area and thus would merit at best a page or two in ice-cream texts. Worse, the guys who knew how to make ices — a cadre of elderly Italian gentlemen — displayed a Manhattan Project-like attitude toward their craft.

In lieu of formal instruction, Feldschu started tasting ices around Manhattan's Little Italy and Long Island pasticceria, trying to figure out on his own what made one ice creamy, another grainy, one vibrant with fruit, another pallid. But it wasn't until a retired Italian baker took pity on the determined novice and inducted him into the secret brotherhood of Italian ices that Feldschu made any real progress. Now, eight years later, Feldschu himself is regularly approached by searchers looking for The Knowledge. And he rarely talks.

**Snowflake Ice Cream Shoppe,
1148 W. Main St., Riverhead,
631-727-4394**

Renowned for its ice creams, Snowflake always features six or seven flavors of Italian ices made on the premises. ■

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